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BETWEEN WORLD WARS

Soon after the Armistice of November 1918, the War Department urged Congress to authorize the establishment of a permanent Regular Army of roughly 500,000 and a three-month universal training system that would permit quick expansion of this force to meet the demands of any new major war. Congress and American public opinion rejected these proposals. It was hard to believe that the defeat of Germany and the exhaustion of the other European powers did not guarantee there would be no major war on land for years to come. Although American leaders recognized the possibility of war with Japan, they assumed that such a war, if it came, would be primarily naval in character. Reliance on the Navy as the first line of national defense remained a cornerstone of U.S. military policy for the next two decades.

Another factor that determined the Army's character between the world wars was the United States' decision not to join the League of Nations, thus rejecting a chance to participate in an international security system. In keeping with a traditional distrust of foreign alliances and large military establishments, the American people also proved unwilling to support an Army in being any larger than required to defend the continental United States and its overseas territories and possessions, to sustain knowledge of the military arts, and to train inexpensive and voluntary reserve components. The Army between the wars was thus a small "mobilization army," focusing much of its time and energy on planning and preparing for future expansion to meet contingencies. As threats seemed to diminish around the world, the interest in funding for even that small army began to wane. And since the Army had huge stocks of materiel left over from its belated production for World War I, there was no push for funding to modernize that small force. Thus the principal concern of the War Department until the 1930s was simply maintaining the manpower to fulfill those peacetime missions.



Troops Arriving Home from France, 1919

Demobilization

Planning for demobilization had begun less than a month before the Armistice, since few in the United States had expected the war to end so quickly. Almost all officers and men in the Army became eligible for discharge when the fighting in Europe stopped. The War Department had to determine how to muster out these men as rapidly and equitably as possible, without unduly disrupting the national economy, while maintaining an effective force for occupation and other postwar duties. It decided that the traditional method of demobilizing by units was most likely to achieve those goals. Units in the United States relocated to thirty demobilization centers around the country so their personnel could be outprocessed and discharged near their homes. Overseas units returned as quickly as shipping space could be found for them, processed through debarkation centers operated by the Transportation Service, and moved to the demobilization centers for deactivation and discharge. In practice the unit system was supplemented by a great many individual discharges and by the release of certain occupational groups, such as railroad workers and anthracite coal miners.

In the first full month of demobilization the Army released approximately 650,000 officers and men, and within nine months it had demobilized nearly 3.25 million without seriously disturbing the American economy. Demobilization of war industries and disposal of surplus materiel paralleled the release of soldiers, but the War Department kept a large reserve of weapons and materiel for peacetime or new emergency use. Despite the lack of advance planning, the demobilization process worked reasonably well.

The Army faced one major concern as the process unfolded. Reflecting its lack of planning for the conclusion of hostilities and return

to a peacetime posture, the Army had no authority to enlist men to replace those being discharged. On February 28, 1919, Congress ended that dilemma by authorizing enlistments in the Regular Army for either one or three years. By the end of the year the Active Army, reduced to about 19,000 officers and 205,000 enlisted men, was again a regular volunteer force.

Immediate Duties

Regular Army units continued to guard the Mexican border during 1919 and 1920 due to the ongoing revolutionary disturbances in that country. Because the National Guard had not yet been reorganized, the Regular Army also had to supply troops on numerous occasions through the summer of 1921 to help suppress domestic disorders arising out of labor disputes and race conflicts in a restless postwar America.

American soldiers remained in Europe for some time as the demobilization continued, guarding against renewed hostilities. A newly activated Third Army crossed the French border into Germany on December 1, 1918, to occupy the region around Koblenz, between Luxembourg and the Rhine River. Eight U.S. divisions organized into three corps participated in the occupation of Germany. Similarly, an Army regiment sent to Italy before the end of hostilities spent four months participating in the occupation of Austria. American occupation troops

OCCUPATION OF THE RHINELAND



Luxembourgers Greeting the American Army of Occupation, 1918

Pursuant to the terms of the Armistice ending Western Front hostilities on November 11, 1918, the Allies (Belgium, France, Great Britain, and the United States) constituted forces that would occupy the German Rhineland. British forces occupied the area on its left, with French forces on its right. The Third Army entered Luxembourg on November 20 and was surprised by the warm reception from the German-speaking Luxembourgers. Proceeding to the Rhine, Third Army forces entered Germany on December 1 and again were greeted with some warmth by most Germans, who

for the most part were relieved not to be under the sway of the French. The American occupation of German territory proceeded largely without incident, though German attitudes toward the occupiers cooled after the Peace Conference at Versailles. Political disagreements between the American and French commanders led General Pershing to comply willingly with U.S. government desires to return American forces to the United States as rapidly as possible. The last U.S. troops on the Rhine departed for home in January 1923.

encountered no unusual difficulties with the populace, and their numbers were rapidly reduced after the Paris Peace Conference ended in May 1919. They numbered only about 15,000 by the beginning of 1920. After rejecting the Treaty of Versailles that resulted from the peace conference, the United States technically remained at war with Germany until a separate peace was signed in the summer of 1921. Occupying forces gradually withdrew after that, until the last thousand troops departed on January 24, 1923.

After the Armistice, Army units continued to serve elsewhere in the world, including two generally unsuccessful expeditions into revolution-torn Russia. In August 1918 the chaos in Russia resulting from the Bolshevik seizure of power induced President Woodrow Wilson to order the Army to join Allied forces in expeditions into Russian territory. Multinational forces penetrated the Murmansk-Archangel region of European Russia and entered Siberia via Vladivostok to safeguard various interests, and support anti-Bolshevik forces. The European Russia force, containing about 5,000 American troops under British command, suffered heavy casualties while guarding Allied war supplies meant for the Tsarist forces and communication lines before withdrawing in June 1919. The Siberian force of about 10,000, under Maj. Gen. William S. Graves, encountered many difficulties in its attempts to rescue Czech troops, captured soldiers of the newly collapsed Austro-Hungarian empire trapped by the deteriorating Russian situation, and to curb Japanese expansionist tendencies in the region between August 1918 and April 1920. Together these two forces incurred about 500 combat casualties. While seen in the West as only a footnote to World War I, the American and Allied intervention into the Russian civil war was deeply resented by the eventually triumphant Reds and continued to foster suspicion of American intentions in the minds of the leaders of the new Soviet Union for years to come.

Between 1923 and 1941, the only Army forces stationed on foreign soil were the garrison of about 1,000 maintained at Tientsin, China, from 1912 until 1938 and a force of similar strength dispatched from the Philippines to Shanghai for five months' duty in 1932. The Marine Corps provided the other small foreign garrisons and expeditionary forces that U.S. policy required after World War I, particularly in the Caribbean area. There remained, of course, the large American garrison in the Philippines with the mission of guarding those islands as part of the

THE SIBERIAN EXPEDITION

In August 1918, as a civil war raged in Russia, the War Department ordered American troops to the Siberian port of Vladivostok. A major aim of this action was to constrain the territorial ambitions of Japan, ostensibly a partner in the intervention. Wisely, the American commander refused to involve U.S. forces in hostilities on behalf of Russian "White" counterrevolutionaries. In January 1920, in view of the ground commander's assessment that the Whites were doomed, the War Department withdrew the American troops. When the last forces left on April 1, the ill-starred episode had created a memory the Russians never forgot and left the graves of 192 Americans in the frozen wastes of Siberia.

American empire and another major garrison in the Panama Canal Zone protecting that vital waterway. We should not discount the importance of these forces in the careers of thousands of officers and men in the inter-war period. It was the principal “real world” mission of a large proportion of the Regular Army throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, the main challenges that confronted the U.S. Army between the Armistice that ended World War I and renewed hostilities in Europe in 1939 were not operational in nature but rather organizational and financial.

Reorganization under the National Defense Act of 1920

After many months of careful consideration, Congress passed a sweeping amendment to the National Defense Act of 1916. The National Defense Act of June 4, 1920, governed the organization and regulation of the Army until 1950 as one of the most constructive pieces of military legislation ever adopted in the United States. It rejected the theory of an expansible Regular Army that Army leaders had urged since the days of John C. Calhoun. In its place the new defense act established the Army of the United States as an organization of three components: the standing Regular Army, the National Guard, and the Organized Reserves. That component consisted of the Officers’ Reserve Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps, two distinct organizations. Each of the three Army components was to be so regulated in peacetime that it could contribute its appropriate share of troops in a war emergency.

The act acknowledged and authorized the historical practice of the United States: a standing peacetime Army too small to be expanded to meet the needs of a large war and reliance on a new force of citizen-soldiers when large-scale mobilizations were necessary. In contrast to earlier practice, training the National Guard and Organized Reserves became a major peacetime task of the Regular Army. To fulfill that mission Congress authorized a maximum Regular Army officer strength of 17,726 officers, more than three times the prewar number. At least half the new career officers were to be chosen from among nonregulars who had served during the war. The act also required that officer promotions, except for doctors and chaplains, be made from a single list. That policy equalized opportunities for advancement throughout most of the Army. Congress authorized a maximum Regular Army enlisted strength of 280,000 men, but the actual enlisted and officer strengths would depend on the amount of money appropriated annually.

The new defense act also authorized the addition of three new branches to the arm and service branches established before 1917. The new branches were the Air Service and the Chemical Warfare Service, reflecting new combat techniques demonstrated during the war, and the Finance Department. The Tank Corps that emerged during World War I, representing another new combat technique, was absorbed into the Infantry.

The National Defense Act of 1920 specifically charged the War Department with mobilization planning and preparation for the event of war, assigning the planning and supervision of industrial procurement to the Assistant Secretary of War and the military aspects of that responsibility to the Chief of Staff and the General Staff. The World War I experience had greatly strengthened the position and authority of

the General Staff in both Washington and Paris. When General John J. Pershing became Chief of Staff in 1921 he reorganized the War Department General Staff on the model of his wartime General Headquarters staff in France. The reorganized staff included five divisions: G-1, Personnel; G-2, Intelligence; G-3, Training and Operations; G-4, Supply; and a new War Plans Division that dealt with strategic planning and related preparations for war. The War Plans Division eventually helped to draft color-coded plans for the event of war with individual nations, such as War Plan ORANGE for Japan; it would also serve as the nucleus for any new wartime General Headquarters established to direct operations. The General Staff divisions assisted the Chief of Staff in his supervision of the military branches of the War Department and of the field forces. The only major change in this organizational framework during the 1920s came in 1926, when the Air Corps was established as an equal combat arm.

Nine geographic corps areas of approximately equal population assumed command and administrative responsibilities for the field forces in the continental United States; departments with similar authority directed forces overseas in Panama, Hawaii, and the Philippines. The division, rather than the regiment, became the basic unit of the interwar Army, particularly for mobilization planning. Each corps area was allocated 6 infantry divisions: 1 Regular Army, 2 National Guard, and 3 Organized Reserve. In addition, a cavalry division patrolled the Mexican border; in Pacific outposts, Army mobile units were organized as separate Hawaiian and Philippine Divisions. The defense act had contemplated a higher organization of divisions into corps and armies, but no such organizations existed in fact for many years.

Education for and within the Army between the world wars received far greater attention than ever before. This reflected the National Defense Act's emphasis on peacetime preparedness and the increasing complexity of modern warfare. The U.S. Military Academy and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program furnished most of the basic schooling for new officers. Thirty-one special service schools provided branch training. These branch schools trained officers and enlisted men of the National Guard and Organized Reserves in addition to the Regular Army, utilizing extension courses to supplement their residential programs. Three general service schools formed the capstone of the Army educational system. The oldest, located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and known from 1922 to 1947 as the Command and General Staff School, provided officers with the requisite training for divisional command and General Staff positions. In Washington, the Army War College and, after 1924, the Army Industrial College prepared senior officers of demonstrated ability for the most responsible command and staff positions and assisted in the development of war plans. By establishing the Industrial College, the Army acknowledged the high importance of industrial mobilization and logistical training for the conduct of modern warfare.

Regular Army Strength and Support

When the National Defense Act was adopted in June 1920, the Regular Army contained about 200,000 soldiers, roughly two-thirds

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the maximum authorized strength. In January 1921 Congress directed a prompt reduction in enlisted strength to 175,000 and in June 1921 decreased that figure to 150,000. A year later Congress limited the Regular Army to 12,000 commissioned officers and 125,000 enlisted men, not including the 7,000 or so in the Philippine Scouts; Army strength stabilized at about that level until 1936.

Appropriations for the military expenses of the War Department also stabilized after the early 1920s at roughly \$300 million per year. This was about half the estimated cost of fully implementing the force structure authorized in the National Defense Act. During this period the United States spent less on its Army than on its Navy, in accordance with the national policy of depending on the Navy as the first line of defense. War Department officials, especially in the early 1920s, repeatedly expressed alarm over Congress' failure to fully fund the force structure described in the National Defense Act. They believed that U.S. strategy required a minimum Regular Army enlisted strength of 150,000, a figure that grew to 165,000 after the Air Corps Act of 1926. From his position as Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur pointed out that in 1933 the active strength of the Army ranked only seventeenth in the world.

Despite its limited size, the Regular Army still deserved international respect. Foreign observers rated its recently established, newly equipped Air Corps second or third in actual power. But the Air Corps' small inventory of modern equipment offered a marked contrast to the rest of the Army, where ground units had to get along as best they could for almost two decades with weapons left over from World War I. The Army was well aware that these old weapons were becoming increasingly obsolete. In 1933 General MacArthur described the Army's tanks, with the exception of a dozen experimental models, as completely useless for employment against any modern unit on the battlefield.

During the interwar era the Army focused its limited resources on maintaining personnel strength rather than on procuring new equipment. Army arsenals and laboratories were consequently handicapped by small budgets. Despite that obstacle they worked continuously to devise new items and to improve old ones, capitalizing on the rapid technological advances of the 1920s and 1930s. Service boards, acting as links between branch schools and headquarters, tested prototypes and determined doctrines for their employment so they could be incorporated into training manuals. Little new equipment was forthcoming for ground units until Army appropriations began to rise in 1936, but the emphasis on maintaining force levels meant that the acquisition of such equipment did not consume scarce resources in a period of rapid obsolescence.

For a number of years only about a quarter of the officers and half of the enlisted men of the Regular Army were available for assignment to tactical units in the continental United States. Many units existed only on paper; almost all had only skeleton strength. The Regular Army's nine infantry divisions possessed the combined strength of only three full divisions. In May 1927 one of those undermanned infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and 200 aircraft participated in a combined-arms maneuver in Texas; but for the most part Regular Army units had to train as battalions or companies.

The continued dispersion of understrength divisions, brigades, and regiments among a large number of posts, many of them relics of the Indian Wars, was a serious hindrance to training Regular Army soldiers; though it was helpful in training the reserve components. Efforts to abandon small posts continued to meet stubborn opposition from local interests and their elected representatives in Congress. In the Infantry, for example, in 1932 the twenty-four regiments available in the United States for field service were spread among forty-five posts, thirty-four of them hosting a battalion or smaller unit.

Most of the organic transportation of field units was of World War I vintage, and the Army did not have the money to concentrate them for training by other means. Nor were there large posts in which to house them if transportation became possible. The best training of larger units occurred overseas in the fairly sizable garrisons the Army maintained in Hawaii, the Philippines, and Panama. Cuts in appropriations and pay in the early 1930s as a result of the Great Depression made travel and training all the more difficult, further reducing the readiness of Army units.

The Reserve Components

Promoting the integration of the Regular Army, National Guard, and Organized Reserves by establishing uniformity in training and professional standards was one of the major purposes of the National Defense Act of 1920. While falling considerably short of fully realizing that goal, the new Army structure did foster an unprecedented amount of military training for the reserve components. This training brought the regular out of his traditional isolation from the civilian community and acquainted large numbers of National Guard and Organized Reserve personnel with the problems and views of professional soldiers. Reserve component units and the groups in training that contributed to their ranks had an average strength of about 400,000 between the wars. The Reserve Component Training Program would result in an orderly and effective mobilization of the National Guard and Organized Reserve into the Active Army during 1940 and 1941.

The absorption of the National Guard into the Regular Army during World War I originally left the states without any Guard units after the Armistice. The National Defense Act of 1920 contemplated a National Guard of 436,000, but its actual interwar strength stabilized at about 180,000. This force relieved the Regular Army of any duty in curbing domestic disturbances within the states from the summer of 1921 until 1941 and stood ready for immediate induction into the Active Army whenever necessary. The War Department, in addition to supplying regular training officers and large quantities of surplus World War I materiel, applied about one-tenth of its military budget to the support of the Guard in the years between the wars. Guardsmen engaged in forty-eight armory drills and fifteen days of field training each year. Though not comparable to Regular Army units in readiness for war, by 1939 the increasingly federalized Guard was better trained than it had been when mobilized for duty on the Mexican border in 1916. Numerically, the National Guard was the largest component of the Army of the United States between 1922 and 1939.

In addition to the Guard, the civilian community contained a large number of trained officers and enlisted men after World War I, which provided a reservoir of manpower for the Army. Few enlisted men joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps to participate in the Organized Reserves after their wartime service. In contrast, large numbers of officers maintained their commissions by serving in the Officers' Reserve Corps (ORC). ORC strength remained fairly consistent during the interwar period at about 100,000 officers, but its composition gradually changed as war veterans were replaced by men commissioned through the ROTC or the Citizens' Military Training Camp (CMTC) programs.

University training programs to prepare citizens for military service had a long history. It can be said to have begun in 1819, when Norwich University in Vermont established the first such program. Soon other military colleges were established and military training gained prominence in the state land-grant schools set up under the Morrill Act of 1862. ROTC was formally established in the Defense Act of 1916. The CMTC program was more recent and limited, emerging from the Plattsburg movement just before World War I and the citizens' training camps it fostered.

For several decades before World War I the Army had provided equipment and annually detailed up to one hundred regular officers to support college military training through ROTC programs, but until the defense acts of 1916 and 1920 the program was only loosely associated with the Army's own needs. The new dependence on the National Guard and Organized Reserves for Army expansion, and the establishment of the Officers' Reserve Corps as a vehicle to retain college men in the Army of the United States after graduation, gave impetus to a greatly enlarged and better regulated ROTC program after 1920. By 1928 there were ROTC units in 325 schools enrolling 85,000 college and university students. Officers detailed as professors of military science instructed these units, and about 6,000 graduates were commissioned in the ORC each year. Thousands of other college graduates received at least some military training through the inexpensive program, which paid rich dividends in 1940 and 1941, when the nation began mobilizing to meet the threat of war.

The Army's CMTC program, a very modest alternative to the system of universal military training proposed in 1919, provided about 30,000 young volunteers with four weeks of military training in summer camps each year between 1921 and 1941. Those who completed three, later four, years of CMTC training and related home-study courses became eligible for commissions in the Officers' Reserve Corps. The CMTC thus provided another source of leadership for the Organized Reserves. Although relatively few officers emerged directly from the program, a substantial number of CMTC participants later attended West Point, entered ROTC programs, or received commissions during World War II.

The Army Air Corps

The airplane and the tank both came to symbolize the changing face of warfare during World War I. But U.S. aviation programs retained their vitality after the war, while the tank fell captive to the conservatism

of existing service branches after the National Defense Act of 1920's dissolution of the Tank Corps. The glamour of flight had captured the public imagination, and champions of air power insisted that the new technology could change the face of warfare. Strategic bombing, according to Italy's Giulio Douhet and other theorists, could replace traditional land and naval actions as the dominant form of warfare by directly targeting an enemy nation's population and industrial base, hence its will and capacity to wage war.

Advocates of strategic bombing disagreed with the Army's prevailing view of the airplane as a vehicle for reconnaissance and fire support, producing a split within both the Army and the Air Service itself. Brig. Gen. (Acting) William "Billy" Mitchell emerged from the war as the leading U.S. champion of strategic air power, demonstrating the potential of heavy bombers in a series of tests against obsolete warships during 1921 and 1923. Mitchell's outspoken behavior and open criticism of prevailing aerial doctrine resulted in his 1925 reduction to the permanent rank of colonel, 1926 court-martial for insubordination, and subsequent resignation from the Army.

The debate over the proper role of air power continued into World War II. As late as 1940 the Army General Staff largely disagreed with the decision of Maj. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, Commander, General Headquarters Air Force, to purchase the B-17 heavy bomber. The decision was referred to as Andrews' Folly, but it marked the culmination of two decades of effort to produce an effective strategic bomber. Dissent extended into the proper structure for the use of air power, as champions of strategic bombing sought to free aerial operations from those of the Army and Navy. In December 1925 a report from a House of Representatives committee chaired by Congressman Florian Lampert called for an independent Air Force combining all Army and Navy aircraft and a Department of Defense to coordinate the three services. A board President Calvin Coolidge established under the leadership of Dwight W. Morrow concluded that a separate air arm and a defense department were not necessary. In the Air Corps Act of 1926, Congress accepted the Morrow Board's recommendation to establish an Assistant Secretary of War for Air Affairs, to rename the Air Service the Air Corps, and to represent the Air Corps on the General Staff.

The Morrow Board's compromise plan provided a greater degree of independence for the advocates of strategic air power, but it also guaranteed that the War and Navy Departments could continue to harness the airplane as a tactical vehicle. Army Aviation pursued both potentials during the interwar period, substantially benefiting from dedicated funding and rapidly advancing technologies. But, despite precedence over many other Army priorities, even the Army Air Corps suffered from limited budgets; and the goals of the five-year expansion program authorized by the Air Corps Act were not met until the United States began preparing for war.

Domestic Employment

The most notable domestic use of regular troops in the twenty years of peace that followed World War I happened in the nation's capital

during the summer of 1932. Several thousand “Bonus Marchers” remained in Washington after the adjournment of Congress dashed their hopes for immediate payment of a bonus for military service in the war. On July 28 marshals and police tried to evict one group encamped near the Capitol, and the ensuing riot produced some bloodshed. President Herbert C. Hoover directed the Army to intervene. A force of about 600 cavalrymen and infantrymen with a few tanks advanced to the scene under the personal leadership of Chief of Staff MacArthur. The troops cleared the Bonus Marchers from the Capitol and eventually evicted them from the District of Columbia, burning their shantytown in the process. The Army had performed an unpleasant task in an efficient manner; but the public largely viewed the use of military force against civilians, most of them veterans, as heavy-handed. The incident tarnished the Army’s public image and helped to defeat the administration in the next election.

Aside from the Bonus Marchers incident, the most conspicuous employment of the Army within the United States after World War I was in a variety of non-military tasks that fell to it because no other institution possessed the necessary organization or resources. After large-scale natural disasters the Army often provided the first substantial relief effort. The Army, especially the National Guard, was used extensively in a variety of humanitarian relief efforts after floods, storms, and fires, following a long tradition of such operations. Army Engineers expanded their work on rivers and harbors for the improvement of navigation and flood control; and for four months in 1934 the Air Corps, on orders from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, took over airmail shipment for the Post Office Department. That endeavor had tragic consequences, as the unprepared Air Corps struggled to meet the challenge during a period of unusually poor weather. Twelve pilots lost their lives in the first few weeks of the operation.

The Army’s most important and immediately disruptive nonmilitary peacetime operation began in 1933, after Congress passed the Emergency Conservation Work Act in response to the Great Depression. The relief legislation put large numbers of jobless young men into reforestation and other reclamation work under the aegis of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) it created. Despite MacArthur’s strenuous protestations that running the CCC would have an adverse effect on Army readiness, President Roosevelt directed him to mobilize the CCC and run its camps without in any way making the program a covert military project.

Within seven weeks the Army mobilized 310,000 men into 1,315 camps more rapidly and orderly than any other mobilization in the Army’s history. For more than a year the War Department had to keep about 3,000 regular officers and many noncommissioned officers assigned to this task; in order to do so the Army had to strip tactical units of their leadership. Unit training came to a halt, and the Army’s

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General MacArthur and Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower stand among troops in Anacostia Flats.

CCC CAMPS

By March of 1933, 13.6 million people were unemployed in the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt, only two days after his inauguration, called a meeting to create a Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC would put more than 3 million young men to work improving public lands. Rather than create a new bureaucracy, the President used existing governmental departments. The U.S. Army's primary function for the CCC was to organize and administer the camps. This was a major logistical undertaking in that each state normally had as many as several dozen camps in operation at one time. A typical camp consisted of a dozen or more barracks, a post exchange, recreational building, mess hall, classroom, dispensary, officers' quarters, blacksmith shop, garage, bathhouse, supply room, green house, and storage buildings. Many Army officers, who otherwise would not have had an opportunity to construct and administer an installation or supervise large numbers of men during the interwar years, significantly benefited from this experience.



CCC Camp in Granite County, Montana

readiness for immediate military employment was nearly destroyed. In the second half of 1934 the War Department called a large number of reserve officers to active duty as replacements for the regulars, and by August 1935 about 9,300 reserve officers not counted in Active Army strength were serving with the CCC. A good many of them continued in this service until 1941.

The Army never wanted to insert military training into the work program, in part because the CCC camps were small and isolated enough to make that task quite difficult. But despite its initial serious interference with normal Army operations and deliberate nonmilitary nature, the CCC program eventually improved the country's military preparedness. It furnished many thousands of reserve officers with valuable experience and gave nonmilitary but disciplined training to over 3 million men, many of whom would serve in the military during World War II.

National and Military Policy

For fifteen years, from 1921 to 1936, American policy accepted the premise that future wars with other major powers, except possibly Japan, could be avoided. National decision makers pursued that goal by maintaining a minimum of defensive military strength, avoiding entangling commitments with Old World nations, and using American good offices to promote international peace and the limitation of armaments. Reacting to a widely held belief that an arms race had contributed to the outbreak of World War I, that the arms race might continue, and that such a contest would prove costly, in 1921 the United States called for an international conference to consider the limitation of major types of armaments, especially capital ships such as battleships and aircraft carriers.

The treaties that emerged from the Washington Naval Conference in 1922 temporarily checked the race for naval supremacy. Their provisions froze new capital-ship construction in the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and other signatory nations for ten years. Limitations on individual capital-ship size and armament and a 5:5:3 ratio in the total permissible capital-ship tonnage of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan guaranteed that none of the three great naval powers could successfully launch a Pacific offensive as long as the powers respected the treaty provisions. Separate provisions froze the construction of new fortifications or naval facilities in the western Pacific. The treaties made a U.S. defense of the Philippines against a Japanese attack nearly impossible, but the general agreement to maintain the status quo in the Pacific and in China offered fair assurance against a Japanese war of aggression as long as the Western powers did not themselves become embroiled in the European-Atlantic area.

During 1928 the United States and France joined in drafting the Pact of Paris, through which many nations renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Thereafter the United States proclaimed that, if other powers did likewise, it would limit its armed forces to those necessary to maintain internal order and defend its national territory against aggression and invasion. In 1931 the Chief of the Army's War Plans Division advised the Chief of Staff that the defense of frontiers was precisely the cardinal task for which the Army had been organized, equipped, and trained. There was no real conflict between national policy and the Army's conception of its mission during the 1920s and early 1930s. But, in the Army's opinion, the government and the American public in their antipathy to war failed to support even the minimum needs for national defense.

The clouds of war began to form again in 1931, when the Japanese seized Manchuria and defied the diplomatic efforts of the League of Nations and the United States to end the occupation. Japan left the League in 1933 and a year later announced that it would not be bound by the postwar system of arms control treaties that had begun with the Washington Naval Conference after the last of its obligations under that system expired in 1936. In Europe, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany during 1933, denounced the Treaty of Versailles, embarked on rearmament, and occupied the demilitarized Rhineland by 1936. Italy's Benito Mussolini launched his own war of aggression by attacking Ethiopia in 1935. Spain's 1936 revolution produced a third dictatorship and an extended civil war that became a proving ground for weapons and tactics used later in World War II.

In response to these developments the U.S. Congress passed a series of neutrality acts between 1935 and 1937, hoping to avoid entanglement in another European conflict. The United States tried to strengthen its international position in other ways by opening diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1933, by promising eventual independence to the Philippines in 1934, and by liquidating its protectorates in the Caribbean area and generally pursuing the policy of the good neighbor toward Latin America.

No quick changes in American military policy followed. But beginning in 1935 the armed forces began receiving larger appropriations that allowed them to improve their readiness for action. Changes in the



Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, ca. June 1940

Army over the next three years reflected the increasingly critical international situation and the careful planning of the War Department during General MacArthur's 1930–1935 tour as Chief of Staff. His recommendations led to a reorganization of the combat forces and a modest increase in their size, accompanied by more realistic planning for using the manpower and industrial might of the United States for war if it should become necessary.

The Army Strengthened

The central objective of the Chief of Staff's recommendations was strategic mobility, using the Army's limited resources to replace horses as a means of transportation and to create a small, hard-hitting force ready for emergency use. In pursuit of those objectives the Army wanted to mechanize and motorize its regular combat units as soon as possible and bring them to full strength so they could be trained effectively. The Army also needed new organizations to control the training of larger ground and air units and combined-arms teams and to command them if war came. Between 1932 and 1935 the War Department created four army headquarters and a General Headquarters Air Force in the continental United States for those purposes. Under these headquarters, beginning in the summer of 1935, regular and National Guard divisions and other units started training together in summer maneuvers and other exercises, including joint exercises with the Navy. In the same year Congress authorized the Regular Army to increase its enlisted strength to the long-sought goal of 165,000. Substantial increases in equipment and housing budgets followed, so that by 1938 the Regular Army enjoyed greater combat strength and

improved readiness. The strength and readiness of foreign armies had been increasing even more rapidly.

The slow improvement in Army readiness by the end of the 1930s highlights the fact that the Army was more prepared for war than many of its critics, arguing from the vantage of hindsight after World War II was over, have been willing to admit. In many ways, the Army was as prepared as it could be to fight the war that the civilian and military leadership of the country expected it to fight, a war focusing on the defense of the western hemisphere—"Fortress America"—rather than the war that finally arrived in 1941. When America was forced into war in a very different strategic world of 1941, a world that saw the fall of France and the near collapse of both the USSR and the British Empire, it was forced to prepare large expeditionary forces for overseas combat on a grand scale for a global, two-front war. None of this was foreseen in the 1930s.

The Army in the 1920s and 1930s, responding as always to the strategic needs of the nation as formulated by the civilian leadership and short on personnel, equipment, and funding, had to focus on its primary assigned mission of hemispheric defense. Most of the modernization funds of the Army were absorbed in the rapid expansion of the new Army Air Corps that was seen as one of the Army's principal contributions to that mission.

The second priority of the Army was the defense of the nation's seaports. To accomplish this, the Army poured huge sums into the modernization of the coastal fortifications at eighteen major seaports, increasing the number and caliber of the coast artillery guns and improving the defenses of their emplacements. Almost one-third of the Army's manpower, over 50,000 soldiers, was tied up in the coast artillery mission as the logical backstop to the Navy and Air Corps defensive belts. The Army even retained a separate coast artillery branch until 1950. In the 1930s the Army was relatively prepared for war but not for the war that came.

During the slow rebuilding of the 1930s the Army began to concentrate, when resources allowed, on equipping and training its combat units for mobile operations rather than for the static warfare that had characterized the Western Front in World War I. It managed to develop some new weapons and equipment that promised improved fire power and mobility once they could be obtained in quantity. Such projects included the mobile 105-mm. howitzer that became the principal divisional artillery piece of World War II and light and medium tanks that were much faster than the lumbering models of World War I. The Army's tanks still reflected their design origins in the Infantry and Cavalry. Infantry tanks were designed to support infantry assaults, and cavalry tanks were developed as "iron horses" to support traditional cavalry missions. Consequently, Army tanks would not compare favorably in firepower, one on one, to World War II German and Russian models. However, many American tanks, such as the fabled M4 Sherman, would be so mechanically reliable and were produced in such great numbers that they proved highly competitive in support of vast infantry formations in mobile warfare.

In terms of infantry weapons, the Army proved highly innovative, adopting the Garand semiautomatic rifle in 1936 as a replacement

In many ways, the Army was as prepared as it could be to fight the war that the civilian and military leadership of the country expected it to fight, a war focusing on the defense of the western hemisphere.

THE TRIANGULAR DIVISION

The World War I square divisions consisted of about 22,000 men each. These divisions possessed considerable hitting and staying power but lacked maneuverability. Hoping to produce a less cumbersome unit more suited for maneuver warfare, the Army in the 1930s successfully tested and adopted a triangular structure of three regiments with a slimmed-down support organization—15,000 men in all. In practice, the new triangular divisions often fought with cross-attached elements from other combat arms. Infantry divisions had tank units assigned to them, and armored divisions had infantry units. Thus the regiments were reconfigured into three combined arms “Combat Commands” (typically Combat Command [CC] A, B, and R [Reserve]). This configuration, especially when matched with the right mix of artillery and close air support, proved both hard hitting and maneuverable. The new division structure would soon prove its worth, not only on the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific but also in the postwar Army.

for the 1903 Springfield. This gave the U.S. soldier a marked advantage over his World War II German or Russian counterparts who still employed bolt-action rifles. The infantryman was also assisted by the comparatively rapid motorization of the Army. Horsepower yielded to motor power as quickly as vehicles could be acquired, although horse cavalry retained a hold on Army thinking and tactics for years. After successful field tests the Army decided to improve the mobility of its regular infantry divisions by reducing them from four to three infantry regiments. The new “triangular” divisions would employ only motor transport, decreasing their overall size to little more than half that of their World War I counterparts but enhancing their mobility and combat power.

The complexities of mobilizing for industrialized warfare required careful planning. The Army’s Industrial Mobilization Plan of 1930 established the basic principles for harnessing the nation’s economic strength to war needs, and continued revisions of the plan through 1939 improved its provisions. Manpower planning followed a similar process and culminated in the Protective Mobilization Plan of 1937. Under that plan, the first step in a general mobilization would be the induction of the National Guard into federal service, providing the Army an initial protective force of about 400,000. The Navy and this defensive force would then protect the nation while the Army engaged in an orderly expansion to planned strengths of 1, 2, or 4 million, as necessary. The Army’s manpower planning included, for the first time prior to actual war, a definite training plan that specified the location, size, and schedules of replacement training centers, unit training centers, and schools. It also incorporated the details of unit and individual training programs and the production of a variety of training manuals.

While these plans eventually helped to guide the mobilization that began in the summer of 1940, they had their faults. Planners set their sights too low. They assumed a maximum mobilization of World War I dimensions, but the Army mobilized more than twice as many men for World War II and required an even greater comparative industrial effort to meet their needs. Until 1939 planners also assumed that mobilization for war would come more or less suddenly, instead of relatively

slowly during many months of nominal peace. The Protective Mobilization Plan standardized many existing weapons designs to facilitate procurement and stockpiling, an understandable decision given the Army's poor equipment state and the ominous international situation. But standardization, in combination with the Army's earlier emphasis on funding personnel strength at the expense of research and development, impeded weapons programs in an era of rapidly advancing military technology. As a result the Army entered World War II with weapons designs from the mid-1930s, many of them already obsolete.

The Beginnings of World War II

The German annexation of Austria in March 1938 and the Czech crisis in September of the same year awakened the United States and the other democratic nations to the imminence of another great world conflict. In retrospect that new conflict had already begun with Japan's 1937 invasion of China. When Germany seized Czechoslovakia in March 1939, war in Europe became a near certainty since Hitler apparently had no intention of stopping his eastward expansion and Great Britain and France had decided that they must fight rather than acquiesce to further German aggression. In August Germany made a deal with the Soviet Union that provided for a partition of Poland and gave Joseph Stalin a free hand in Finland and the northern Baltic states. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. France and Great Britain responded by declaring war on Germany but provided little direct assistance. An overwhelming majority of the American people wanted to stay out of the new war if they could, and this sentiment necessarily governed the initial U.S. response to the perilous international situation.

President Roosevelt and his advisers, fully aware of the danger, had launched a limited preparedness campaign at the beginning of 1939. By that date improvements in aircraft technology and the unproven but intriguing theories of strategic bombing had introduced a new factor into the military calculations of the United States. It would soon be technically feasible for a hostile European power to establish air bases in the western hemisphere from which to attack the Panama Canal (the key to American defense) or the continental United States itself. Such an act would negate the oceanic security that the United States had traditionally enjoyed. Increasing the power of the Army Air Corps to counter that aerial threat became a key goal of defense planners as Europe braced for war.

Army and Navy officers began drafting a new series of war plans for facing a hostile coalition as the preparedness campaign began. Students at the Army War College had started researching such coalition plans during 1934, working in close cooperation with the General Staff. The RAINBOW plans would be the successors to existing plans that used colors to symbolize potential adversaries, e.g., War Plan ORANGE for a war against Japan. The new plans incorporated aspects of both War College research and the older color plans. A month after the European war began, the President, by formally approving the RAINBOW I plan, changed the avowed national military policy from one of guarding only the United States and its possessions to one of hemispheric defense, a policy that guided Army plans and actions until the end of 1940.

The Army concentrated on making its regular force ready for emergency action by providing it with full and modern equipment as quickly as possible and by conducting in April 1940 the first genuine corps and army training maneuvers in American military history.

Immediately after the European war started, the President proclaimed a limited national emergency and authorized increases in Regular Army and National Guard enlisted strengths to 227,000 and 235,000, respectively. He also proclaimed American neutrality, but at his urging Congress soon gave indirect support to the Western democracies by ending the prohibition on munitions sales to nations at war embodied in the Neutrality Act of 1937. British and French orders for munitions in turn helped to prepare American industry for the large-scale war production that was to come. When the quick destruction of Poland was followed by a lull in the war, the tempo of America's own defense preparations decreased. The Army concentrated on making its regular force ready for emergency action by providing it with full and modern equipment as quickly as possible and by conducting in April 1940 the first genuine corps and army training maneuvers in American military history.

These maneuvers were followed the next year by some of the largest maneuvers in Army history, in Louisiana and North Carolina. The Louisiana Maneuvers in particular were important testing grounds for new doctrine and equipment as well as for the expanded officer corps. Armies, corps, and divisions conducted massive motorized and armored movements in a series of "force on force" mock battles.

The adequacy of the Army's preparations depended on the fate of France and Great Britain. Germany's April 1940 conquest of Denmark and Norway, the subsequent defeat of the Low Countries and France, and the grave threat Great Britain faced by June forced the United States to adopt a new and greatly enlarged program for defense during that month. Before the summer of 1940 had truly begun, it appeared that the United States might eventually have to face the aggressors of the Old World almost alone.

The Prewar Mobilization

Under the leadership of Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall and, after July, of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, the Army initiated a large expansion designed to protect the United States and the rest of the western hemisphere from any hostile forces that might be unleashed from the European conflict. The Army expansion was matched by a naval program designed to give the United States a two-ocean Navy strong enough to deal simultaneously with the Japanese in the Pacific and Germany and its new war partner, Italy, in the Atlantic (if they defeated Great Britain). Both expansion programs had the overwhelming support of the American people, who were now convinced that the danger to the United States was very real but remained strongly opposed to entering the war. Congressional appropriations between May and October 1940 reflected the threat. The Army received more than \$8 billion for its needs during the following year, a greater sum than it had received to support its activities over the preceding twenty years. The munitions program approved for the Army on June 30, 1940, called for the procurement of all items needed to equip and maintain a 1.2-million-man force by October 1941, including a greatly enlarged and modernized Army Air Corps. By September the War Department was planning to create an Army of 1.5 million soldiers as soon as possible.

PARACHUTE TEST PLATOON

The Army had considered organizing an "air infantry" as early as May 1939 in light of German air-landed forces' 1938 seizure of the Vienna airport. In January 1940 the Army decided to study the feasibility of air infantry and the air transport of ground troops. Germany's use of airborne troops in their May 1940 invasion of the Low Countries gave these studies added impetus. On June 25 the War Department directed the Infantry School to organize a parachute test platoon. Two officers and 49 enlisted men were selected from over 200 volunteers, and the platoon undertook a rigorous course of physical training and small-unit tactics, with classes on parachute packing and parachuting. The first platoon member jumped from an aircraft on August 16. The first mass jump occurred on August 29; in September the War Department authorized constitution of the 1st Parachute Battalion, marking the Army's entry into this new form of warfare.

On August 27, 1940, Congress approved the induction of the National Guard into federal service and the activation of the Organized Reserves to fill the ranks of this new Army. It also approved in the Selective Service and Training Act of September 14 the first peacetime draft of untrained civilian manpower in the nation's history. Units of the National Guard, draftees, members of the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and the reserve officers required to train them all entered active service as rapidly as the Army could construct camps to house them. During the last six months of 1940 the Active Army more than doubled in strength, and by mid-1941 it achieved its planned strength of 1.5 million officers and men.

A new organization, the General Headquarters, took charge of training the Army in July 1940. During the same month the Army established a separate Armored Force and subsequently the Antiaircraft and Tank Destroyer Commands that with the Infantry, Field Artillery, Coast Artillery, and Cavalry increased the number of ground combat arms to seven. The Infantry's tank units and the Cavalry's mechanized brigade combined to form the Armored Force, over the objections of the Chiefs of the Infantry and Cavalry branches. Chief of Staff Marshall believed that he had to take this drastic step in light of the reluctance of those conservative branches to pursue a role for armor greater than supporting the infantry and performing traditional cavalry missions. He also saw the startling success of German blitzkrieg operations in the opening days of the war in Europe.

During 1940 and 1941 the existing branch schools and a new Armored Force School concentrated their efforts on improving the fitness of National Guard and reserve officers for active duty, and in early 1941 the War Department established officer candidate schools to train men selected from the ranks for junior leadership positions. In October 1940 the four armies assumed command of ground units in the continental United States and thereafter trained them under the supervision of the General Headquarters. The corps area commands became administrative and service organizations. Major overseas garrisons were strengthened; and the Army established new commands to supervise the garrisoning of Puerto Rico and Alaska, where there had been almost no Regular Army troops for many years. In June 1941 the War Department established the

THE FATHER OF AMERICAN ARMOR

Adna R. Chaffee, Jr. (1884–1941), son of the second Chief of Staff of the Army Adna R. Chaffee, Sr., struggled to mechanize the Army for fourteen years, beginning as a major on the General Staff in 1927 and culminating in his command of U.S. Armored Forces (1940–1941). One of the first American cavalrymen to recognize that the tank must supplant the horse on the battlefield, Chaffee also understood that armored warfare would require the participation of all the branches and services. His constant advocacy of this concept ensured that the U.S. Army, unlike the British Army, was spared a controversy between “all-tank” and combined-arms advocates. Though his command of the Armored Force would be cut short when he died of a brain tumor in 1941, his role as Father of American Armor was secure.



Chaffee

Army Air Forces to train and administer air units in the United States. In July it began the transformation of General Headquarters into an operational post for General Marshall as Commanding General of the Field Forces. By the autumn of 1941 the Army had 27 infantry, 5 armored, and 2 cavalry divisions; 35 air groups; and a host of supporting units in training within the continental United States. But most of these units were still unready for action, in part because the United States had shared so much of its old and new military equipment with the nations actively fighting the Axis triumvirate of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Toward War

On the eve of France's defeat in June 1940, President Roosevelt had directed the transfer or diversion of large stocks of World War I weapons, ammunition, and aircraft to both France and Great Britain. After France fell, these munitions helped to replace Britain's losses from the evacuation of its expeditionary force at Dunkerque. Additional aid to Britain materialized in September, when the United States agreed to exchange fifty over-age destroyers for offshore Atlantic bases and the President announced that future U.S. production of heavy bombers would be shared equally with the British. Open collaboration with Canada from August 1940 provided strong support for the Canadian war effort (Canada had followed Great Britain to war in September 1939). These foreign aid activities culminated in the Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 that swept away the pretense of American neutrality by openly avowing the intention of the United States to become an “arsenal of democracy” against aggression. Prewar foreign aid was largely a self-defense measure; its fundamental purpose was to help contain the military might of the Axis powers until the United States could complete its own protective mobilization.

Thus by early 1941 the focus of American policy had shifted from hemispheric defense to limited participation in the war. Indeed, by then it appeared to Army and Navy leaders and to President Roosevelt that the United States might be drawn into full participation in the not-too-

distant future. Assuming the probability of simultaneous operations in the Pacific and the Atlantic, they agreed that Germany was the greater menace and that if the United States did enter the war it ought to concentrate first on the defeat of Germany. This principle was established as shared policy in staff conversations between American and British military representatives in Washington ending on March 29.

After those conversations the Army and Navy began adjusting the most comprehensive of the existing war plans, RAINBOW 5, to correspond with ongoing military preparations and actions. During the following months the trend moved steadily toward American participation in the war against Germany. In April the President authorized an active naval patrol of the western half of the Atlantic Ocean in response to German submarine warfare. In May the United States accepted responsibility for the development and operation of military air routes across the North Atlantic via Greenland and across the South Atlantic via Brazil. During that month it appeared to the President and his military advisers that a German drive through Spain and Portugal to northwestern Africa and its adjacent islands might be imminent. This prospect, together with German naval activity in the North Atlantic, caused the President to proclaim an unlimited national emergency and direct the Army and Navy to prepare an expeditionary force to be sent to the Azores as a step toward blocking any German advance toward the South Atlantic. Then, in early June, the President learned that Hitler was preparing to attack the Soviet Union. That offensive would divert German military power away from the Atlantic for some time.

The Germans did invade the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941; three days later U.S. Army troops landed in Greenland to protect the island from German attack and to build bases for the air ferry route across the North Atlantic. The Army units and nearby Coast Guard elements quickly captured several German weather teams in the Greenland area, highlighting the strategic importance of the region. Earlier that month President Roosevelt had decided that Americans should relieve British troops guarding another critical outpost in the North Atlantic, Iceland, and the first contingent of U.S. forces reached that island nation in early July. A sizable Army expeditionary force followed in September. In August the President and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Newfoundland and drafted the Atlantic Charter, which defined the general terms of a just peace for the world. By October the U.S. Navy was fully



I Want You for the U.S. Army
James Montgomery Flagg, 1941

“OHIO”

By mid-1941, with no attack on the United States, National Guardsmen and draftees whose congressionally mandated twelve months of active service had begun in the fall of 1940 were growing restless. Although inadequate training facilities and equipment were improving, morale dipped as lengthy political debate over an extension of service proceeded. In the camps, the hand-lettered acronym “OHIO” (for Over the Hill in October, the end of the mandated year) appeared on walls, weapons, and vehicles. Congress, by a one-vote margin in the House in August 1941, precluded a disastrous disruption in the building of the Army by extending the period of service six months.

engaged in convoy-escort duties in the western reaches of the North Atlantic and its ships, with some assistance from Army aircraft, were joining British and Canadian forces in their struggle against German submarines. In November Congress voted to repeal prohibitions against the arming of American merchant vessels and their entry into combat zones. The stage was set, as Prime Minister Churchill noted on November 9, for “constant fighting in the Atlantic between German and American ships.”

These overt moves toward involvement in the war had solid backing in the American public opinion. Only an increasingly small, though vociferous, minority criticized the President for the nation’s departure from neutrality. But the American people were still not prepared for an open declaration of war against Germany.

American policy toward Japan stiffened as the United States moved toward war in the Atlantic. Although the United States wanted to avoid a two-front war, it was not ready to do so by surrendering vital areas or interests to the Japanese as the price of peace. When the Japanese moved large forces into southern French Indochina in late July 1941, the United States responded by cutting off oil shipments and freezing Japanese assets. At the same time the War Department recalled General MacArthur from his retirement and position as Field Marshal of the Philippine Army to serve as Commander of both U.S. and Philippine Army forces in the Far East. It also decided to send Army reinforcements to the Philippines, including heavy bombers intended to dissuade the Japanese from making any more southward moves.

For their part, the Japanese, while continuing to negotiate with the United States, tentatively decided in September to embark on a war of conquest in Southeast Asia and the Indies as soon as possible. The plan called for immobilizing American naval opposition through an initial air strike against the U.S. Fleet stationed at the great naval base of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. When intensive last-minute negotiations in November failed to produce any accommodation, the Japanese made their decision for war irrevocable.

The United States should not, perhaps, have been as surprised as it was by Japanese attacks on Hawaii and the Philippines on December 7, 1941. Japan’s expansion aims by then were quite obvious, and the United States was the only major obstacle in its path. When Roosevelt cut off U.S. shipments of oil to Japan, the situation grew even

MACARTHUR AND THE PHILIPPINES

Upon stepping down as U.S. Army Chief of Staff in 1935, Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) led a military mission to the Philippine Islands and became military adviser to the nascent commonwealth. Focusing on his task “to survey the military needs of the Philippine commonwealth,” General MacArthur sought to create a defense force that could defend the Philippines after independence. He encountered numerous obstacles: financial demands that outpaced available funds, the War Department’s reluctance to provide tangible support, unexpectedly high training requirements for Filipinos (who had high illiteracy rates and spoke numerous dialects), lagging conscription numbers, and the growing Filipino fear of Japan. In late 1940 War Department policy changed, and full-scale mobilization of the Philippines began in mid-1941. However, time was about to run out.

more critical. Despite this evidence and the benefit of superb U.S. code-breaking efforts against Japanese naval and diplomatic codes (MAGIC intercepts) similar to British successes against the Germans (code-named ULTRA), America was caught militarily and psychologically unprepared for war.

The Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines immediately ended the remaining division of American opinion on participation in the war, and the United States officially entered hostilities with a unanimity of popular support that was unprecedented in its military history. This was also the first time that the United States entered a war with a large force in being and an industrial system partially retooled for hostilities. The Army stood ready to defend the western hemisphere against invasion with a force of 1,643,477 soldiers. This is the mission for which it was prepared. Yet, on many levels, it was not ready to take part in a very different type of war, a war of large-scale expeditionary forces launched to conduct complex combined and joint operations across the huge expanses of two oceans. Many months would pass before the United States could begin even limited offensives against the well-prepared, battle-hardened forces of the Axis powers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some commentators have described U.S. policy as isolationist in the interwar era. What impact did this policy have on the Army in the interwar period, and how did this affect national security policy?

2. Interwar military policy emphasized maintaining force levels over procuring state-of-the-art equipment. Why did the War Department make that decision, and how ready was the Army for war in this period?

3. Describe the U.S. Army school system during the interwar period. What was its role, and how well did it perform that role? What was its impact on the Army?

4. During the late 1930s the United States began to rearm and eventually abandoned its policy of strict neutrality to support France and Great Britain. How did the President implement this policy shift? Could neutrality and a continued policy of defending only U.S. territory have served the nation's interests better than supporting the allies?

5. What roles, missions, and operations did the Army perform during the interwar period? How successful was the Army, and did these missions or operations enhance or detract from its ability to perform its wartime missions?

6. To what extent did the outbreak of European hostilities in 1939 find the Army operating with outdated doctrine or organizations? How did this compare with prior experience, especially from World War I? What lessons can we learn?

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